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The Buffalo Soldiers: Guardians of the Uintah Frontier 1886 - 1901

BY RONALD G. COLEMAN

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL STUDIES on the history of black soldiers in the post-Civil War years.¹ More than one historian has noted their presence at Fort Duchesne, Utah, but none has examined the soldiers' on-duty as well as off-duty activities during their years on the Uintah

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¹ For examples see Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History* (New York, 1974); William A. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967).

Frederic Remington drawing.



frontier.² The population of this region of eastern Utah was heterogeneous; Native Americans and whites were in substantial numbers. Various companies of soldiers, white and black, were stationed at Fort Duchesne in the last decade and a half of the nineteenth century. White troops were from the Twenty-first and Sixteenth Infantry and the Seventh and Fifth Cavalry, while the black units were all from the Ninth Cavalry. Except for a six-month period in 1898 when the troops were fighting in the Spanish-American War, the post from September 1892 until March 1901 was garrisoned entirely by the Ninth Cavalry's "buffalo soldiers."³ Black soldiers at Fort Duchesne gave Uintah County the second largest black population in Utah from 1890 until early in 1901. Thus, the stationing of black troops in the region provides an example of interracial adjustments on the western frontier.⁴

With the exception of racial antipathy from Indians and whites, the experiences of black soldiers there and in other western stations were similar to those of white soldiers. Black troops were used to subdue and control Native Americans. They assisted in quelling disputes among whites, protecting stage and railway lines, building and maintaining military posts, opening and clearing roads, and seeing to the general well-being of frontier settlers. All military units practiced their skills in horsemanship, marching, and marksmanship. Drill exercises, inspections, and annual marches kept the men in a state of preparedness. Black troops, like their white counterparts, performed ceremonial duties, such as participating in parades and serving as honor guards at Memorial Day observances.⁵

² See Marvin Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1891-1917* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), p. 80; Thomas G. Alexander and Leonard J. Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier, 1872-1912, Forts Cameron, Thornburgh, and Duchesne," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32 (1964): 344-52.

³ Returns from United States Military Posts, Fort Duchesne, 1886-1902. Microfilm copies of the holograph post returns are available at the Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Some claim the term "buffalo soldiers" originated when Native Americans first came in contact with black soldiers. One story says the term started when black troops serving in the northern plains area started wearing buffalo hides as overcoats on cold winter marches. The black faces peering from the hides resembled the buffalo. Another story says the name was given by Native Americans to black troops because of the similarity between the hair of black soldiers and the mane of the buffalo. Noting that the buffalo was sacred to the Indians, historian William Leckie says: "... it is unlikely that he would so name an enemy if respect were lacking." At times the term applied to all black soldiers but was more often associated with the cavalry units. The men of the Tenth Cavalry had a regimental coat of arms with the head of the buffalo for an insignia. John M. Carroll, ed., *The Black Military Experience in the American West* (New York, 1973), pp. 179-80; Leckie, *Buffalo Soldiers*, pp. 25-26.

⁴ In 1890 there were 127 blacks in Uintah County; by 1900 the population had increased to 214. See George Ramjoue, "The Negro in Utah: A Geographical Study in Population" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1968), pp. 9-10, 12.

⁵ Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, pp. 80-82, 85-90; Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 10-11.

OPPOSITION FROM THE UTES

Reports of conflict among the White River, Uncompahgre, and Uintah bands of Ute Indians, the Utes' lack of respect for government employees, and concern for the safety of white settlers had influenced the War Department to build a military post on the Uintah frontier in 1886.⁶ A site was selected between the Indian agencies of Whiterocks and Ouray on the Uinta River, approximately eight miles above its confluence with the Duchesne River. Troops B and E of the Ninth Cavalry under the command of Maj. Frederick W. Benteen were sent from Fort McKinney, Wyoming, to join four companies of the white Twenty-first Infantry from Fort Steele, Wyoming, and Fort Sidney, Nebraska, for duty at the new post.⁷

The Utes were disgruntled over the decision to build a military post in their midst. A few white men circulated rumors among the Indians that the soldiers were coming to kill several of the Ute chiefs, place others under arrest, and remove the remaining Utes to another area, following which the reservation lands would be given to settlers. The white men urged the Utes to drive all the whites away from Uintah and Ouray, take whatever beef and supplies they wanted, and then attack the soldiers in the canyons. Spurred by the rumors, some Uintah Utes joined the Uncompahgre and White River bands. Women and children were sent to the mountains and the men prepared for war.

Several Uintah chiefs rode to the Uintah Agency in Whiterocks and told special Indian agent Eugene E. White of the impending crisis.



Frederic Remington drawing.

⁶ Alexander and Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier," pp. 343-44; Floyd A. O'Neil, "A History of the Ute Indians of Utah until 1890" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1973), pp. 171-75.

⁷ Alexander and Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier," pp. 344-46; Special Post Return, Fort Duchesne, August 24, 1886; Post Return, Fort Duchesne, August, 1886; *Provo Sunday Herald*, March 14, 1954.

White called for a council the following day with all of the White River and Uintah Utes and also asked that an invitation be sent to the Uncompahgres for a council in Ouray the day after that. The Utes agreed to hear White in council.⁶

In the meetings with the Ute bands, White sought to allay their fears concerning the soldiers. They were not, he told them, a threat to the Utes as long as the Indians behaved themselves. An attack on the soldiers by Ute warriors would only bring more soldiers, and eventually the Utes would be subdued and removed from their land. White told the Ute bands that their alleged white friends wanted their land and knew it would become available if the Utes initiated an attack against the United States Army. As an example of what would happen to the Utes if they attacked the soldiers, White pointed out that Geronimo, the Apache chief, had been relentlessly pursued by the army, captured, and sent to Florida where he was away from his people and probably plagued by mosquitoes and alligators.⁷

White asked the Utes for help in keeping peace and suggested that they return their women and children from the mountains. He promised to arrest the whites who had circulated the rumors if they came on the reservation again and admonished the Utes to put away their weapons except when hunting game and to behave "like sensible men." The Utes accepted White's counsel and Chief Sowawick of the White River band said, "If the soldiers want to sit down on the Reservation, all right—just so they do not try to hurt us without cause or take our country away from us."

Apparently, the Utes had assumed that all of the soldiers stationed at Fort Duchesne would be white men. As agent White returned to Uintah from his council with the Uncompahgre he was met by five fast-riding Utes coming from Uintah, among them an old headman named Sour who shouted excitedly:

Buffalo soldiers! Buffalo soldiers! Coming. Maybe so tomorrow. Indians saw them at Burnt Fort yesterday, coming this way. Don't let them come! We can't stand it! It's bad very bad! . . . You did not tell us that buffalo soldiers were coming, and we did not agree for them to come. We did not think about them at all. Our arrangement applies only to white soldiers. That is all right. We told you they might come, and they may.

⁶ E. E. White, *Experiences of a Special Indian Agent* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. 122–31, 145–46.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 134–39.

But all the Indians want you to come back quick and send them back. We cannot stand for them to come on our Reservation. It is too bad. . . .

Leaping from his pony, Sour rushed up to White's buggy, grabbed White's black coat sleeve, and rubbing it over his (Sour's) hand and face, exclaimed, ". . . All over black! All over black, buffalo soldiers! Injun heap no like him!!" With a jerk of his hand, the old man then rubbed his head all over and shouted, "Wooly head! Wooly head! All same as buffalo! What you call him, black white man? NIGGER! NIGGER!"¹⁰

White was surprised to learn of the Utes' dislike for the black soldiers. He tried to mitigate Sour's fears by telling him that the leaders of the black soldiers were white men. He promised Sour that the black soldiers would conduct themselves honorably. Somewhat relieved, "Sour agreed that they might come and gave . . . his word that he would hurry back and satisfy all the Indians." Upon returning to the agency, White learned "that Sour's excitement had been shared by the entire tribe." He was told:

The Utes had a strange and irreconcilable antipathy to negroes. Up to that time they had never suffered one to live on their Reservation. Several had dropped in among them from time to time in the past, but only to soon disappear and never be heard of again.

When the four companies of the Twenty-first Infantry arrived to establish the post, the Indians gathered at several high points and with anxiety watched the men organize the camp or "sit down" as the Utes called it. The next day Major Benteen and approximately seventy-five buffalo soldiers arrived, increasing the military personnel to nearly two hundred fifty men.¹¹

On August 23, 1886, Fort Duchesne was officially established.¹² The Utes harangued agent White, several of them intimating a violent confrontation if the soldiers were not kept within their cantonment area.¹³ On the second night following the arrival of the black troops, a commotion spread through Sowawick's village and several camps near the agency. Rumors that the soldiers were coming toward their encampment and that they might be buffalo soldiers ran throughout the reservation. Women and children fled toward the mountains. White left his home

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 139, 141, 146-47, 147-48.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 148, 149.

¹² Post Return, Fort Duchesne, August 1886.

¹³ White, *Experiences of a Special Indian Agent*, p. 149.

to investigate the rumors; puzzled that soldiers would be out at night, he sent a message to Sowawick, asking him to send several of his chiefs to accompany him (White) to discover the facts. The party left the agency and rode toward Antero's camp, located five miles away in the direction of Fort Duchesne. When they arrived at Antero's they discovered that the camp had been abandoned in haste.

The Utes in the party surmised that the Indians had all been captured by the soldiers. They wanted to return immediately, but the agent suggested they make an inquiry at the garrison. Although apprehensive, the Utes agreed. As they rode toward the post they encountered other Utes who had heard the rumors and were searching for the soldiers. The commanding officer of the post assured White and the Utes that all of the soldiers were present at the fort and that the officers would make

sure the men remained orderly.

White returned to the agency and learned that a young herder from Antero's camp had seen a party of Uncompahgres coming from Ouray and in the dark had mistaken them for soldiers. He then ran to the camp and sounded the alarm, thus explaining the hasty abandonment of the camp by Antero and his people.¹¹ Although clearly a "false alarm," the episode indicates the nervousness in the Indian community caused by the presence of the new troops.

There are two possible explanations, or a combination of the two, that may shed some light on why the Utes showed a greater aversion to black soldiers than to their white counterparts. The buffalo was an important symbol for Plains Indians and figured prominently in their su-



Frederic Remington drawing.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 150-57.

perstitutions, taboos, dances, societies, visions, and cures.¹⁵ Perhaps the Northern Utes had a particular fear of black soldiers based upon the similarity of the mane of the buffalo and the "woolylike" hair of many blacks. The second possibility is that the White River Utes remembered that black soldiers had come to the aid of Maj. T. T. Thornburgh in the fall of 1879 during the Battle of Milk River in western Colorado. In that action, Capt. Francis Dodge, who had been commanding a scouting party near Milk River, learned that Thornburgh's command was under siege and led Company D of the Ninth Cavalry to the battle. Thirty-five buffalo soldiers and their officers joined the beleaguered men in trenches at Milk River. The soldiers were able to sustain themselves for three additional days until a large contingent of soldiers from the Fifth Cavalry arrived and forced the Utes to retreat.¹⁶

The Battle of Milk River, together with the killing of Indian agent Nathan C. Meeker at the White River Agency, influenced the decision to remove the White River Utes as well as the Uncompahgre from their lands in western Colorado to reservations in eastern Utah.¹⁷ There may well have been in the minds of reservation-dwellers an association of blacks with these earlier unhappy events.

Although the Utes did not like having black troops nearby, their initial fears were allayed so that within a few weeks of their arrival the Indians were "harvesting quietly and going about their usual occupations." Commenting on the Utes' attitude toward black soldiers, the post trader said, "the dislike is not sufficient to cause apprehension." Within several years the initial distrust was diminished and the Utes no longer feared coming to the post.¹⁸

ROUTINE AT THE POST

With the immediate threat of conflict with the Utes abated, the soldiers' attention and efforts were turned to regular garrison duties and the building of the fort. Canvas tents, banked with soil for warmth, were

¹⁵ Tom McHugh, *The Time of the Buffalo* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972), pp. 110-11.

¹⁶ The Southern Utes did not oppose the presence of blacks. John Taylor, a black man who had served in the Union army was accepted by the tribe. He married a Ute woman and they had several children. The descendants are recognized and accepted as members of the tribe. This information was given to me by Dr. Floyd O'Neil, an authority on the Ute Indians. For information on the Battle of Milk River, see Carroll, *The Black Military Experience*, pp. 223-43, 381-87.

¹⁷ Alexander and Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier," pp. 339-40.

¹⁸ *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 12, 1886; *Salt Lake Herald*, June 13, 1897.

used as temporary housing until more permanent quarters could be built. Each tent also contained a stove.¹⁹

The daily routine for soldiers throughout the army began with reveille at 5:45 A.M. Following breakfast, the men had a fatigue call at 7:30 A.M., lunch at 12:15 P.M., and a return to fatigue or school for some of the enlisted men and NCOs at 1:00 P.M. At 4:30 fatigue duty ended, and from 4:45 to 5:15 P.M. the men went through drills and had guard mount at 5:30. After dinner the men were free until tattoo at 9:00 P.M. followed by taps. This routine was broken on Sundays and holidays when officers relieved the troops of all but the necessary fatigue and guard duties.²⁰

The foods eaten by soldiers were basically the same during the years of the Indian wars: beef or bacon, beans, potatoes, fresh vegetables from the post garden, fruits, and bread.²¹ In the years after the Indian wars some of the food served black regiments was different from that of white regiments and reflected the cultural differences between the races. Mostly the different foods were served on holidays, but at times they were included on the regular menu. A typical menu for a black regiment by 1895 was:

Breakfast: puffed rice, sugar and cream, stewed beef, baked potatoes, toast, tea or coffee

Lunch: cream of potato soup, oyster crackers, beef pot pie, steamed rice, lima beans, radishes, steamed pudding, vanilla sauce, bread

Dinner: pickled pigs' feet, chile con carne, hot biscuits, butter, syrup, and tea.²²

The soldiers' living quarters were typical of most military posts built during the period. In 1890 they were described as being good, except for water leaking in several of the quarters occupied by married men. Bathing facilities at the post were poor. Weather permitting, the soldiers bathed in the nearby "mosquito-infested, rocky-bottomed river." The

¹⁹ Alexander and Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier," pp. 344-45; Stephen Perry Jocelyn, *Mostly Alkali* (Caldwell, Ida., 1953), pp. 311-12. Capt. Stephen Jocelyn was an officer with the Twenty-first Infantry. He served at Fort Duchesne from 1886 until the spring of 1888. At that time he was transferred to Fort Douglas. His son, Stephen Perry Jocelyn, the author of *Mostly Alkali*, made extensive use of his father's diary in writing the biography.

²⁰ Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 80. Fatigue duty included repairing roads and clearing snowbreaks between the fort and Price as well as between the fort and other points. Details were also sent to work at the sawmill, and there were various jobs within the fort itself. See Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, January 1888, February 1889, March and December 1890.

²¹ Carroll, *The Black Military Experience*, p. 178.

²² Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 80.

post surgeon reported that the "lack of bath tubs, lack of conveniences for warming water . . . and lack of privacy makes bathing uncomfortable, so it is frequently neglected."²³

In anticipation of the coming winter the garrison was a beehive of activity. By the end of October 1886 a sawmill was installed thirty miles north of the post and operated around the clock, cutting lumber obtained from the nearby canyons. A quarry and kiln were also established, and the quarried stone was hauled to the fort. Many soldiers were assigned the duty of improving the road between Fort Duchesne and Price for hauling supplies. Others worked on building a telegraph line between the two points.²⁴

New recruits, civilian employees, and a few women increased the garrison's population to approximately three hundred fifty by the end of the autumn. Two or three of the women were black, the wives of soldiers. They supplemented their husbands' income by taking in washing for post residents. Five of the six white women were wives or relatives of military personnel, the sixth was the wife of the post trader.

The winter of 1886-87 was difficult for residents of Fort Duchesne, as well as for settlers throughout the West. The temperature often fell to twenty degrees below zero or lower. The continual winds blew sand into the tents from all directions. Despite the harshness of the weather the garrison was relatively free of sickness, and as spring approached construction of the post resumed. Building plans called for construction of a hospital, commissary, storhouse, and larger quarters for both officers and enlisted men. After visiting the fort in July 1887 Gen. George Crook, commander of the Department of the Platte, expressed satisfaction over the developments.²⁵

Military duty at Fort Duchesne was typical of frontier duty throughout the West. The reservations had to be patrolled and disturbances quelled. Potential danger arose every year when some of the Ute bands came back to hunt deer and other game on their old hunting grounds in western Colorado. White Coloradans resented the Utes' annual return,

²³ Herbert M. Hart, *Old Forts of the West* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1965), p. 135; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 80.

²⁴ Jocelyn, *Mostly Alkali*, p. 314; *Provo Herald*, March 14, 1954. Shortly after the telegraph line was completed, several young Utes cut the line and made firewood from the poles. A group of cavalymen were sent to apprehend the culprits and bring them to the fort. Their punishment was a brief stay in the guardhouse on a bread and water diet. See *Builders of Uintah: A Centennial History of Uintah County, 1872-1947* (Uintah County: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1947), pp. 187-88.

²⁵ Jocelyn, *Mostly Alkali*, pp. 312, 315-17; *Provo Herald*, March 14, 1954; *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 16, 1887.

and the cavalrymen were assigned to locate and send the Utes back to the Utah reservations.²⁶

Sometimes the Coloradans attempted to drive the Utes out without the help of Fort Duchesne cavalrymen. In August 1887 the Colorado militia pursued a group of Utes, led by Colorow, from the former hunting grounds to the eastern boundary of the reservation. There the militiamen encountered black soldiers who had been sent to prevent the Coloradans from invading the reservation lands. On another occasion a company of buffalo soldiers commanded by Capt. Henry H. Wright was sent to investigate rumors that two white men and five Indians were killed during a fight on the Snake River near Lily Park, Colorado. On their way to Lily Park the soldiers met a party of Utes who had just left there. According to the Utes, the Colorado game warden and twenty-four deputies rode into a camp of seven Indians and started shooting. Two Ute women were wounded and two men were killed. Another account said a dispute arose between the game wardens and the Utes over hunting rights, and the Coloradans used the argument to start a fight. The returning black soldiers "were of the universal opinion that the Indians killed . . . were wantonly massacred by the game warden and his deputies."²⁷

Rumors kept the buffalo soldiers busy. Reports that part of the Uncompahgre reservation land was to be opened for non-Indians brought hundreds of "sooners" into the area. Many left the reservation on learning they had been misled. However, two to three hundred decided to remain, and twenty buffalo soldiers under the command of Capt. M. W. Day were sent to eject the intruders. Recognizing that many of the trespassers were there because of a misunderstanding, Captain Day was ordered to avoid, if possible, any conflict that might lead to bloodshed. All but about twelve men heeded the soldiers' orders to leave. Those who refused were arrested and taken to the fort. After removing the "sooners," the troops and agency officials destroyed the locations and monuments posted by the intruders.²⁸

Providing escort for Indian agents when large amounts of money, annuities to the Indians, were being transported was an important duty for black cavalrymen. Extra precautions were taken in March 1898

²⁶ *Salt Lake Tribune* August 13, 1887; *Vernal Express*, November 17, 1895; *Salt Lake Herald*, October 27, 1897.

²⁷ Post Return, Fort Duchesne, August 1887; *Salt Lake Herald*, October 27, 1897; *Vernal Express*, October 28, November 4 and 11, 1897.

²⁸ *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 10, 12, 1897.

when hearsay of an impending robbery attempt began circulating between the fort and Price, Utah. The reports were reinforced by the sighting of several members of the Robbers Roost gang in the vicinity of Price and Helper. It was said that the thirty thousand dollars to be paid to the Indians was lucrative enough to justify the robbery attempt.²⁹

Captain Wright and Troop F were sent to the railroad depot at Price, and a detachment was sent from Price to Helper when the officer in charge heard that the attempted robbery was to take place at the second depot. When the train arrived at Helper it was guarded by the Ninth Cavalry troops, and no attempt was made to rob the train. The buffalo soldiers returned quickly to Price making sure that a holdup did not occur between stations. When the train arrived in Price approximately forty armed soldiers stood guard on the platform while the money was transferred to an open government wagon. The soldiers then escorted the Indian agent, Capt. G. A. Cornish, and the money from Price to Fort Duchesne. Although rumors persisted that the Robbers Roost gang would attack between Price and the fort, the holdup did not take place.³⁰

BLACK-WHITE RELATIONS

Relations between black and white soldiers stationed at the post were generally amicable. A visitor to the fort said, "The white infantrymen and the black cavalymen at the fort fraternize without any fine discrimination as to color." The men associated with one another, ate together, and according to the same visitor may have slept and fought "the festive bed bug together."³¹

During the summer of 1888 the two companies of black cavalymen participated along with white companies from Fort Duchesne, Fort Douglas, and Fort Bridger in extensive maneuvers held in Strawberry Valley. The maneuvers took place near the reservations to demonstrate the military force that could be brought against the Utes should they break the peace. Later, with the closing of the post at Fort Bridger,

²⁹ Robbers Roost was an outlaw refuge in eastern Wayne County, Utah, on an elevated plateau near the summit of the San Rafael Swell. It was difficult to approach and thus an ideal hideout. Butch Cassidy was the most famous outlaw to use the Roost. For more information see Charles Kelly, *The Outlaw Trail: Butch Cassidy and His Wild Bunch*, rev. ed. (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1959), pp. 141-47, 302-3; *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 1, 1898.

³⁰ *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 1, 5, 1898.

³¹ The relationship between black and white soldiers at Fort Duchesne was typical. See Carroll, *The Black Military Experience*, p. 185. *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 28, 1886. It is unlikely that black and white soldiers shared the same sleeping quarters, even in tents. By 1888 the fort had permanent quarters and the soldiers, except for married men, would have been quartered according to units. See Hart, *Old Forts of the West*, p. 135.

Wyoming, in 1890, the Fort Duchesne troops would become responsible for guarding the entire Indian frontier areas of eastern Utah, western Colorado, and southwestern Wyoming.³²

The cooperation between black and white soldiers stationed at Fort Duchesne does not imply that racial prejudice was nonexistent. Maj. F. W. Benteen, who was commander of Fort Duchesne from August 23 to December 18, 1886, commented in a letter written after his retirement that in 1866 he had turned down a promotion to major in the Tenth Cavalry and had remained a captain in the Seventh Cavalry rather than be associated with black troops. Blaming fate for his later association with the Ninth Cavalry, Benteen felt secure enough financially to retire after thirty years, saying, "it was not proper to remain with a race of troops that I could take no interest in and this on account of their 'low-down,' rascally character."³³

The ill-disguised contempt that some white officers felt toward blacks was not limited to black enlisted men but to black officers as well. Between 1866 and 1917, a commission in the army could be obtained by three methods: graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point, which supplied most of the officers; by enlisted men with at least two years of army service passing a qualifying examination; and by civilians successfully completing the same examination. Very few blacks applied for qualification in the last two categories, but blacks did seek appointments to West Point. Of the twenty-three who received appointments between 1870 and 1889, twelve passed the entrance examination. Only three graduated.³⁴ In 1880 Gen. J. M. Schofield, superintendent of the academy, said:

To send to West Point for four years' competition a young man who was born in slavery is to assume that half a generation has been sufficient to raise a colored man to the social, moral, and intellectual level which the average white man has reached in several hundred years. As well might the common farm horse be entered in a four-mile race against the best blood inherited from a long line of English racers.³⁵

Blacks at the academy were ridiculed and harassed by white cadets. Between 1866 and 1900 West Point graduates filled all available posi-

³² Jocelyn, *Mostly Alkali*, pp. 323-24; Alexander and Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier," pp. 345-46.

³³ Carroll, *The Black Military Experience*, pp. 191-92.

³⁴ Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 72.

³⁵ Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History*, p. 65.



Fort Duchesne, 1883. U.S. Signal Corps photograph, National Archives.

tions for officers in the army. The antipathy shown blacks at the academy would be extended to black officers and enlisted men in the military garrisons of the West.³⁶

Two of the three black West Point graduates, John H. Alexander (1887) and Charles Young (1889), served at Fort Duchesne between 1888 and 1901. Both men were from Ohio; Alexander's success inspired Young to emulate him. John Alexander was stationed at Fort Duchesne from June 1888 to October 1891. During that time he performed the regular duties assigned an officer. He directed fatigue details, led a patrol to remove intruders from the reservations, and took the soldiers on practice marches.³⁷

Col. Edward Hatch, commander of the Ninth Cavalry, protested when he learned that Lt. Charles Young was to be assigned to his regiment. Noting that Lieutenant Alexander was already assigned to the

³⁶ Henry O. Flipper (1877) was the first black graduate from West Point. During his years at the academy, the white cadets ignored his presence. Flipper was court-martialed in 1882 and dismissed from the service. It was alleged that some irregularities occurred in the records of the commissary when Flipper was in charge of the books. He was cleared of the charges in 1878, and his remains were reburied with full military honors. Johnson Parker was assaulted by white cadets in 1880. See *Ibid.*, p. 64; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, pp. 72-73, 74.

³⁷ Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, 1887-1901; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, pp. 73-74; Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, June and July 1888, April, June and October, 1890.

Ninth, Hatch said the addition of Young might cause white "officers not to apply for assignment to the regiment." The War Department responded that Young was one of several new West Point graduates who had not been assigned to a regiment. To avoid the possibility that the next available cavalry vacancy might be in a white regiment, the War Department had assigned Young to the black Twenty-fifth Infantry with the agreement that he would be transferred to a black cavalry regiment when a vacancy became available. The next vacancy was in the Ninth, Young's new assignment. Charles Young arrived at Fort Duchesne in October 1890.³⁸

Although the two Ohioans were stationed at Fort Duchesne together for nearly a year, they had little time to fraternize. Lieutenant Alexander was in charge of the government sawmill seven of the twelve months. Young was on leave for six weeks, and Alexander spent the month of September 1891 on detached duty in North Carolina. The following month Alexander was transferred to Fort Robinson, Nebraska.³⁹

Lieutenant Young was stationed at Fort Duchesne until the fall of 1895. He later was reassigned to Fort Duchesne after the Spanish-American War but did not return to the fort until September 1899. He remained there until January 1901 but was periodically assigned detached service duty away from Utah. As professor of military science he taught at Wilberforce University in Ohio. During the Spanish-American War he took a leave of absence from the regiment in order to become a major with the Ninth Battalion Colored Ohio Volunteers. After the war ended he served as assistant mustering officer in Macon, Georgia, and once again taught at Wilberforce University before returning to Fort Duchesne. While on duty at Fort Duchesne Lieutenant Young, like Alexander, carried responsibilities common to junior officers throughout the army. In addition to leading patrols, he served as commissary officer, summary court officer, post exchange officer, and was in charge of the post school at various times.⁴⁰

³⁸ Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 84.

³⁹ Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, October 1890 to October 1891. Alexander died of natural causes in 1894. See Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, January 1894 to February 1901; November 1890; October 1891; April 1892; September 1899 to January 1901.

Young tutored and encouraged Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., who had joined the regular army after serving as an officer in one of the black volunteer regiments during the Spanish-American War. At Fort Duchesne, Davis studied, with Young's help, for the qualifying examination given for commission in the U.S. Army. He scored 91 percent on the final examination, received his commission, and was transferred to the Tenth Cavalry. Davis was the first black general in U.S. military history. His son Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., graduated from West Point in 1936 and later became a general in the U.S. Air Force. See Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, p. 74; Foner, *Blacks and the Military*, pp. 93-94.

A deterioration in the relations between black and white residents of Fort Duchesne appeared in 1896 and could have been the result of racial prejudice by white officers. During the spring of that year many of the black troops began to clamor for a change of station. They complained that the post had become "a prison instead of a military reservation." The white population of the garrison organized the Owl Club in August of that year and blacks were excluded. The club was to provide social activities such as card parties, theatrical performances, and other amusements during the coming fall and winter.⁴¹

Relations between the black soldiers at Fort Duchesne and civilian citizens in the area continued to be amicable, however, and there was a general absence of the blatant contempt for black soldiers expressed in some frontier communities such as San Angelo, Texas, and Johnson County, Wyoming. It has been suggested that "racism may have been mildest and whites most tolerant of black soldiers in communities near Indian reservations." White residents of the Uinta Basin firmly believed there was a need for military protection and vigorously opposed any plans that might lead to a removal of the troops. In addition, the fort and its military personnel contributed handsomely to the local economy. Yet, white civilians referred to the black soldiers as "darkeys" and "coons." During a dispute in a saloon Jack Thomas, a local white rancher, drew a gun and said, "You black son of a bitch, I will kill you." Racist manifestations, while few, leave little doubt of the existence of race prejudice among civilians.⁴²

Nevertheless, prejudice did not prevent the black soldiers and white civilians from occasionally engaging in social activities. The troops might entertain the residents of Vernal with an evening of comedy at the local opera house, and before the performances the post band would play and march in a street parade. Capt. F. H. E. Ebstein of the Twenty-first Infantry had organized a band comprised of both black and white soldiers at the fort during the winter of 1887-88, and both officers and enlisted

⁴¹ New officers were transferred to Fort Duchesne during this period. See Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, March to August 1896; *Vernal Express*, May 28 and August 6, 1896.

⁴² Carroll, *The Black Military Experience*, pp. 186-87; Frank N. Schubert, "The Suggs Affray: The Black Cavalry in the Johnson County War," *Western Historical Quarterly* 4 (1973): 57-68; Frank N. Schubert, "Black Soldiers on the White Frontier: Some Factors Influencing Race Relations," *Phylon* 32 (1971): 415 [for a similar opinion see Thomas A. Phillips, "The Black Regulars," in *The West of the American People*, ed. Allen G. Bogue, Thomas D. Phillips, and James Wright (Itasca, Ill., 1970), pp. 138-40]; *Vernal Express*, November 17, 24, December 1, 29, 1892; Alexander and Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier," p. 346; *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 10, 1887; *Provo Herald*, March 14, 1954; Phillips, "The Black Regulars," p. 140, suggests that merchants in towns near forts manned by blacks allowed economic consideration to overcome race prejudice; *Vernal Express*, May 4, November 25, 1899.

men had contributed money for the instruments. Also, on occasion, a racially mixed group sang for post residents. Sports brought the races together as well. Black and white companies competed against each other in baseball contests, and the Fort Duchesne baseball team competed with the team from Vernal.⁴³

In May 1897 Troop B was sent on a practice march to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City. There the cavalymen played a baseball game with the Twenty-fourth Infantry team. Although previously strong competitors, they could have suffered fatigue from the long trek, for they lost by a score of 23 to 9. Two months later Troop F received orders to travel to Fort Douglas on a practice march. The actual purpose of the trip was for the cavalymen to participate in Utah's Jubilee Celebration. The men were absent from Fort Duchesne from July 13 to August 2. The brief duty in Salt Lake City probably seemed like heaven to soldiers accustomed to the isolation of the Uinta Basin. On the evening of July 24 Troop F gave a "thrilling exhibition of horsemanship" for the civilians and soldiers in attendance on the lower parade ground at Fort Douglas.⁴⁴

OFF-DUTY HOURS

The off-duty activities of black soldiers at Fort Duchesne were similar to those of soldiers at other frontier posts. Some spent their off-duty hours drinking and gambling. Others sought the temporary companionship of prostitutes who frequented the saloon in an area known as the Strip. The Strip encompassed a triangular-shaped piece of land between the Uncompahgre and Uintah reservations, approximately one and a half miles from Fort Duchesne. Federal, state, and county law enforcement agents were uncertain as to who had jurisdiction over the area, and this proved an advantage to the Indians, whites, and blacks who visited there for liquor, gambling, and other pleasures.⁴⁵

Tempers often flared in the Strip, and soldiers were sometimes involved in the ensuing disputes. The previously mentioned Jack Thomas, a white rancher, was killed there. Thomas often gambled in the Strip with members of the black troops. He was killed and a black soldier

⁴³ *Salt Lake Herald*, March 22, 1898; *Vernal Express*, March 24, 1898; Jocelyn, *Mostly Alkali*, pp. 320, 322; *Uintah Papoose*, May 29, 1891; *Eastern Utah Telegraph*, April 16, 1891; *Vernal Express*, June 23, July 7, 1898, June 23, 1900.

⁴⁴ *Salt Lake Herald*, May 24, 1897; Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, July and August 1897; *Salt Lake Herald*, July 24, 1897.

⁴⁵ *Salt Lake Herald*, May 2, 1899.

wounded in the brothel adjoining the saloon. The incident occurred when Thomas intervened in a dispute involving black soldiers. The white man drew his gun and struck William Carter before shooting him. Thomas was then shot and killed by the wounded Carter. During the melee Abraham McKee, another black soldier, joined in the shooting spree. At the inquest the jurors ruled that the shooting was justifiable and Carter was exonerated. The less-fortunate McKee was taken to Fort Logan, Colorado, where he faced a military court for his participation in the affair.⁴⁶

To prevent black troops from going to the Strip, a guard was placed on the Duchesne bridge. Soldiers evaded the guard by walking beyond the bridge and swimming across the river. When the soldiers returned to the bridge, they were arrested, taken to the guardhouse, and fined a month's pay. The men were angered at Capt. John Guilfoyle's attempts to keep them from the Strip. There were rumors that a recent fire at the post had been deliberately started in retaliation. Other rumors blamed the fire on Indians or white businessmen on the Strip who were equally incensed with Guilfoyle.⁴⁷

Almost all of the disputes involving black soldiers, however, were with their own army mates. For example, the two cooks of Troop I became embroiled in an argument that led to a fight. One of them died as a result of his injuries. Some of the fights did not involve soldiers. Dennis Ford, a black employee of the post trader, quarreled with the Chinese Ho Sing at the latter's restaurant. Ford stabbed Ho in the breast, was arrested, and placed in the guardhouse. Violence was a regular occurrence on the Strip and was by no means limited to blacks.⁴⁸

Off-duty hours were also spent in activities other than drinking and gambling. A number of soldiers used their free time to further their education at the post school. The troops had a Masonic military lodge on the post. The isolation from a black civilian population forced black soldiers and their families residing on military garrisons to initiate their own social activities. On special occasions, such as holidays or when a favorite

⁴⁶ Ibid. The circumstances that led to the shootings are confusing. One report claims that two soldiers were arguing when one drew a gun. Orrin Curry, an employee, was attempting to get the gun when Thomas entered the room (*Vernal Express*, May 4, 1899). Another report (*Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1899) says the black soldiers were arguing with prostitutes when Thomas entered the room and confronted the soldiers. On May 2, 1899, the *Herald* had reported that the dispute was over the attentions a white prostitute, Sarah Allred, was paying to the black soldiers. See also, *Vernal Express*, May 4, 1899; *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 26, 1899.

⁴⁷ *Salt Lake Herald*, July 10, 17, 1899.

⁴⁸ *Vernal Express*, April 21 and 28, 1900; December 29, 1892.

member of the company was leaving the post, a dinner party and dance were often given and all of the black residents joined in the festivities.⁴⁹

Black soldiers organized a brass band and others performed in a minstrel group. Baseball, boxing, and track attracted the interest of many troops. Baseball was by far the most popular athletic activity of the black troops at Fort Duchesne as well as of other black regiments. As noted earlier, the company teams played against one another and with white company teams when they were stationed at Fort Duchesne, and sometimes challenged the local team from Vernal. Besides competing in team sports, many soldiers spent their leisure hours swimming or fishing in nearby rivers.⁵⁰

DEPARTURES

Citizens from Price and nearby towns turned out in large numbers to say farewell to the buffalo soldiers in April 1898. The men of Troops B and F were leaving for Tennessee before going to Cuba to fight in the Spanish-American War. The companies, including officers, numbered about 127 men. In Price the soldiers were feted by the local community with a lunch at the town hall. As the soldiers entered the hall they were serenaded by two lines of children from Wellington and Price singing "Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys" and other patriotic songs. After lunch soldiers and civilians played baseball. That evening both the civilians and soldiers entertained the community. The troops departed the next day by train amidst cheers and best wishes for their success.⁵¹

The black troops were replaced at Fort Duchesne by two companies of white soldiers from the Seventh Cavalry. Then, in October 1898 Troops C and I of the Ninth Cavalry arrived at Fort Duchesne from Montauk Point, Long Island, New York. Black troops from the regular army units had been sent to Montauk Point for rest and recuperation after a gallant display of bravery and patriotism in Cuba. The new men quickly adjusted to the rigors of a frontier post.⁵²

⁴⁹ The educational opportunities at posts varied, depending on facilities and personnel. Lt. Charles Young was in charge of the Fort Duchesne school from November 1899 to January 1901. According to the 1900 census schedule all the black soldiers at Fort Duchesne were able to read and write. See also Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, 1899 to 1901; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, pp. 74, 104-5; *Broad Ax*, October 9, 1897; *Vernal Express*, January 11, 1894, May 7, 1896.

⁵⁰ *Vernal Express*, March 24, 1898; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, pp. 104-5; *Uintah Papoose*, May 29, July 17, 1891; *Eastern Utah Telegraph*, April 30, 1891; *Vernal Express*, June 8, 1893, June 28, 1894, July 7 and 28, 1900.

⁵¹ *Eastern Utah Advocate*, April 28, 1898.

⁵² Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, Special Returns, April, October, and November 1898; Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer*, pp. 44-45.

Rumors of an impending departure from Fort Duchesne begin circulating among the troops in June and July 1900. In June 1899 Troop C had been sent to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City to replace members of the Twenty-fourth Infantry who were being sent to San Francisco and from there on to the Philippines. It was widely believed that the Ninth Cavalry would be going to the newly acquired colonial possession. Many soldiers were excited over moving from Fort Duchesne, but the rumors were premature and the troops remained at the post. The disappointment was short-lived. In March 1901 Troop H of the Fifth Cavalry was sent to Fort Duchesne from Fort Wingate, New Mexico, and Troops I and K of the Ninth Cavalry were dispatched to the Philippines via San Francisco. The 192 buffalo soldiers and their 2 officers left the post on March 4, 1901, bringing to a close nearly fifteen years of black military duty on the Uintah frontier.⁵³

⁵³ *Vernal Express*, June 16, July 18, 1900; *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 21, 1899; *Vernal Express*, July 28, 1900; Post Returns, Fort Duchesne, March, April, and July 1901. The main body of black soldiers left the post in March; however, eight men remained at the fort until July 1901.

Fort Duchesne, ca. 1890, with cairns marking entrance. Courtesy National Archives.





Book Reviews

Prehistory of Utah and the Eastern Great Basin. By JESSE D. JENNINGS. University of Utah Anthropological Papers, no. 98. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1978. Xii + 263 pp. Paper, \$15.00.)

An evaluation of Jesse D. Jennings's *Prehistory of Utah and the Eastern Great Basin* is difficult since I am of several minds about its aim and quality. On the positive side, the monograph is what it was intended to be: a general review of Utah prehistory directed toward the intelligent nonprofessional. On the negative side, the monograph is not what it could have been: it falls short of what we have come to expect from an archaeologist of Jennings's stature, experience, and ability.

Readers with an interest in Utah's unique prehistoric cultural heritage will find this volume to be a necessary foundation for any collection of references. It contains a relatively complete guide to all the most important archaeological sites in the state. It is replete with diagrams, site photographs (a few of which are upside down), and photographic displays of utilitarian and unique artifacts in a measure sufficient to give even a novice an adequate feel for material and technological aspects of past cultures. The monograph is well organized on a simple, straightforward, readily grasped, chronological basis. Most importantly, the prose style avoids the technical jargon, without in any way being condescending, that so often clouds archaeological monographs.

One of the major drawbacks to the monograph is the rather limited treat-

ment given prehistoric subsistence patterns and techniques. From the monograph the reader can learn what kind of houses prehistoric peoples built or what kind of pottery they made, but it is difficult to determine how they lived or how they adjusted to changes in both their natural and cultural environments. I personally find people more interesting than potsherds; and an investigation into what made past cultures tick, even had it involved descent into the realm of speculation, would have been welcome in a general introductory treatment of this sort.

Actually, this lack of sufficient treatment of subsistence is derived from what I see as being the monograph's most serious fault. That is simply that it is out of date. In the last ten years a variety of work, primarily oriented toward the procurement of information on past subsistence and settlement systems, has produced a number of alternative interpretations of Utah's prehistoric past. But Jennings has completely avoided any discussion of this recent work, and, as a result, the monograph presents an interpretation to which many practicing archaeologists could not fully subscribe. There is an attempt to excuse this failure with an introductory caveat that the manuscript was submitted to the press in 1973. Unfortunately, it is clear that the failure to include this

new material is a product of intent rather than time, since the references contain citations published as late as 1977. Obviously, the manuscript was updated after its initial submission, and the selective exclusion of material seems unusual even in a general overview.

For all that, *Prehistory of Utah and the Eastern Great Basin* is an excellent introduction to the archaeology of the state. Although aimed at the layman, it is useful to the professional. It is the product of a man who has given much of his life to the archaeology of Utah. By far the great majority of research so succinctly summarized in this mono-

graph is the direct or indirect result of Jesse Jennings's commitment to understanding prehistoric cultures of western North America. That that research has been both extensive and consistently excellent is obvious from the monograph. What is not obvious is that that work has had a tremendous impact on archaeological thought far beyond the borders of Utah. The simple, straightforward presentation of this work belies its unusual quality, and readers should be aware that this summary is rooted in well-fertilized soil.

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Utah State Historical Society

The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West. By RICHARD V. FRANCAVIGLIA. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1978. Xviii + 177 pp. \$12.50.)

The uniqueness of the Mormon settlements in the western United States has been recognized by both Mormon and non-Mormon visitors since the initial occupancy of the Salt Lake Valley. For early migrants Mormonland was the new Zion in the tops of the mountains, for Gentile travelers and migrants it was the oasis between the Missouri and the West Coast. For the generations of visitors, migrants, and residents since that time, Mormonland has represented diverse things, ranging from cultural center to Mecca; from diversion from the monotony of Nebraska, Wyoming, and Nevada to center for a quaint religious sect. Implicit in all of the descriptions of Mormonland through the years has been the concept of a unique group occupying an unusual environment upon which they made a unique and permanent imprint. The purpose of Francaviglia in writing his book is to examine the region of Mormon settlement to determine if there is in fact a unique Mormon landscape and to specify the characteristics that contribute to it.

The book consists of five short chapters that attempt to provide a definitive statement on the Mormon landscape. The first chapter provides an introduction to the Mormon landscape by describing a "typical" Mormon town. The author uses a hypothetical community called Canaanville as a vehicle for describing the Mormon landscape. The landscape is described in stereotypes of lombardy poplars, irrigation ditches, block letters on mountainsides, mountain-valley relationships, hay derricks, scripturally based place names, dilapidated fences and farm buildings, wide streets, and unique architectural style for church and home. Chapter two represents a quasi-scientific analysis of the Mormon landscape based on a sample of forty-two Mormon, non-Mormon, and partially Mormon towns. The chapter presents maps showing the incidence of the features Francaviglia has specified as part of the Mormon landscape and concludes they are in fact associated with Mormon towns. Based on his analysis, the author constructs a map showing the relative preponderance of the

landscape features "unique" to Mormondom.

The remaining three chapters of the book consist of the author's impressions of the causes of the Mormon landscape (three); impressions of the Mormon landscape in art and literature (four); and a superficial attempt to show how present-day Mormons perceive their landscape (five).

Francaviglia's book is something of an enigma. Although published in 1978, the most recent reference is to anecdotal material from newspaper sources in 1969. Remarkable for their absence are important seminal articles on elements of the Mormon landscape published in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* and elsewhere in the last decade. It seems highly unusual for someone undertaking a definitive work on the landscape of a region as widely recognized as the Mormon region to ignore key articles on architectural styles, village morphology, and farming patterns.

The quality of the work itself reflects that of the bibliography. The author has recognized some of the key features associated with small rural communities in areas settled by the Mormons and does an adequate job of describing them. His explanation of their origins and motives for their existence is at best questionable, however. For example, he concludes that the generally unkempt nature of fences in rural Mormondom reflects encouragement of church leaders to be thrifty and conserve resources. He also indicates that much of the encouragement by church leaders to clean up rural Mormon towns by demolishing old barns, removing junk equipment, etc., stems from Lady Bird Johnson's beautification programs. He is obviously unaware of recurrent pleas by church leaders from Brigham Young to the present on the same theme. Of greater concern are statements such as the one claiming the City of Zion plan "is perhaps the most important single docu-

ment in the history of the settlement of the west" and that Salt Lake City and other Mormon communities followed its guidelines. Erroneous statements such as this are too numerous to catalog in a short review but generally indicate the quality of the book.

In general, the book can be characterized as a subjective, impressionistic attempt to describe an important geographical region without adequate research or documentation to do justice to the area. The sense of place, particularly characteristic landscapes, is an integral part of geography. This book does justice neither to the concept of landscape in the discipline nor to the unique area it attempts to describe. There is not one Mormon landscape, but several, and all are evolving. Francaviglia describes a relic landscape, that of rural, preindustrial, small town Utah, Idaho, and Arizona. This landscape represents only a fragment of the Mormon landscape, one which is increasingly atypical. Moreover, even the elements that constitute the landscape Francaviglia describes are largely drawn from the broader American culture. Mormon isolation and poverty prior to the twentieth century led to their establishment, and the marginal resource base of the small rural towns Francaviglia examines ensures their survival. The author's failure to recognize the relationship of the landscape he describes to the broader process of American settlement, his unwillingness to look beyond those elements recognized by even casual tourists, and the limited nature of the supporting research, seriously flaw the volume. There is a Mormon landscape, and this volume describes a portion of it in an uneven manner. Hopefully, it will not deter other authors from undertaking a definitive study of what is widely recognized as one of America's most distinctive regions.

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Wells Fargo in Arizona Territory. By JOHN THEOBALD and LILLIAN THEOBALD. Edited by BERT M. FIREMAN. (Tempe: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1978. Xiv + 210 pp. Cloth, \$12.50; paper, \$10.00.)

The Americanization of Arizona proceeded via many routes. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the Wells Fargo Express Company often carried forth this process at a canter. For over two decades John and Lillian Theobald explored Arizona history where it should be studied: on the land, in the archives, and especially among the people. The result is *Wells Fargo in Arizona Territory*, a monograph that contributes mightily to understanding pioneer Arizona's complex transportation frontier. It is a local history of the famous express company that brought commerce and culture to Arizona and linked the territory to the rest of the nation.

From 1859, when Wells Fargo first entered Arizona, until 1912, when the American Railway Express absorbed its express division, Wells Fargo economically tied Arizona's destiny with eastern and California financial interests. This bond, forged in territorial times, has remained a crucial factor in the state's commercial lifeline. Generally, Wells Fargo offered a dependable and speedy express service across Arizona's deserts, mountains, and plateaus, frequently reaching remote areas before the United States Postal Service. Throughout their volume the Theobalds' sympathy remains with Wells Fargo, especially when pitted in competition with the monopolistic and heavily subsidized government post office.

The authors conscientiously investigate the multifaceted company throughout territorial Arizona. They counter the movie-made stereotype which often depicts Wells Fargo history as a continuous series of bloody stage and train robberies. As a matter of fact the Wells Fargo Company used public and private carriers and did not own stage lines

in Arizona. While noted for delivering bullion and payrolls, Wells Fargo also pioneered the use of refrigerated cars which stimulated the expansion of irrigated agriculture. The express company transported everything from gila monsters—at double the ordinary rate—to citrus fruits. In isolated areas it often served as the only local bank. Indeed, the Wells Fargo Express Company exerted a vast impact on the territory.

Almost half of the book consists of pictures, tables, and biographical sketches. Whenever possible the text is illustrated with black-and-white photos of agents and individuals who worked for Wells Fargo. Although one is advised to read the volume with a good road map at hand, Don Bufkin's cartography adds some spatial perspective. As a result of painstaking research the authors list over six hundred agents, their locations, and duration of service. The Theobalds' human approach to history emerges in their brief biographical sketches of over forty expressmen. They aptly portray the diverse individuals who contributed to Arizona's multicultural heritage.

Wells Fargo in Arizona Territory could be an indispensable reference for students of territorial history if it included a bibliography, index, and footnotes. Any future edition should provide these aids to researchers. At times the authors' antiquarian outlook prohibits them from pondering the significance of their data. The overall writing style is a bit irritating because the quality varies from an engaging, flowing introduction to other sections that appear tedious and patched together. Although the authors' purpose is to describe the Wells Fargo experience in Arizona, a brief analysis and comparison of its history beyond the territory's

borders would give the reader a welcomed perspective. For example, was the Arizona story unique or common?

While writing *Wells Fargo in Arizona Territory* John Orr Theobald passed away, but his book will be used by serious investigators of Arizona terri-

torial transportation. It is a fine memorial to a man who deeply loved his state and its varied heritage.

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The Black Towns. By NORMAN L. CROCKETT. (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979. Xvi + 244 pp. \$14.00.)

Between 1877 and 1915 American blacks experienced the most intense period of overt racial prejudice and discrimination since the Civil War. Afro-Americans responded to this heightened racism in a variety of ways, including vigorous protest, economic self-help, political accommodation, and even flight to Canada, Mexico, Africa—any land that offered blacks a chance for decent treatment. These alternatives have been analyzed by historians in some detail since the late 1960s. Norman L. Crockett's *The Black Towns* surveys for the first time another alternative adopted by some Afro-Americans during this period, the establishment of all-black urban settlements.

Crockett selects five towns, Mound Bayou, Mississippi, Nicodemus, Kansas, and three Oklahoma communities, Langston, Boley, and Clearwater, as representative of the sixty or more all-black towns founded during this period from Alabama to California. Virtually every phase of town life is skillfully covered, including politics, economic growth and boosterism, and cultural and social life. The author analyzes the motives of town founders and finds them a curious mix of racial goals peculiar to Afro-Americans during that period and civic boosterism endemic to all town promoters of that era. Thus, Nicodemus would represent the "salvation of the race," but it would also, after securing either the Union Pacific or Missouri Pacific Railroad, be the "metropolis of Northwestern Kansas."

The author is at his best when he points out the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in black town development, namely the establishing of all-black communities in areas surrounded by hostile whites; the founding of towns when industrialization, mass transportation, mass advertising, and even agricultural technology rendered many of the town functions obsolete; and, finally, the acceptance of the temporary segregation that the all-black towns represented in order to prove black economic and political capabilities and thus facilitate the full integration of the residents into the American mainstream. In short, most of the factors that originally encouraged the creation of these communities ultimately brought about their demise.

For the most part the book reads extremely well. A tremendous amount of material on five widely disparate towns is handled deftly and succinctly. Yet there are problems. The book is structured around topics common to all five towns. Thus, a discussion of politics in Mound Bayou will immediately be followed by a similar discussion for Nicodemus or Boley. Unfortunately, there is no transition from one paragraph to the next. One paragraph explains the lack of interest in Mound Bayou politics in 1904, and the following paragraph abruptly moves to the election of the Nicodemus town council in 1886. Chapter four is unwieldy, moving from a discussion of the cotton economy to local business ventures, social stratification, civic and fraternal life, and, finally, intellectual and

cultural strivings. Although this chapter is not significantly longer than the others, its widely divergent topics might have been better handled in two chapters. There are a few factual errors, such as the reference to Bishop "James" McNeal Turner (p. 170) that should have been Henry McNeal Turner. Finally, the overall discussion of the towns would have been enhanced by the inclusion of population tables giving the reader some idea of the comparative size of these towns, their periods of greatest growth and sharpest decline.

Nevertheless, the deficiencies of *The Black Towns* are far outweighed by its major contributions. It analyzes an aspect of black urban history that has been ignored and in the case of the Kansas and Oklahoma towns documents the struggles of Afro-Americans on the frontier. Those interested in Afro-American, urban, and western history will find this book well worth reading.

QUINTARD TAYLOR

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Railroads in the West. Edited by DON L. HOF SOMMER. (Manhattan, Kan.: Sunflower University Press, 1978. 120 pp. Paper, \$8.00.)

This volume appears to be one of the strangest books on railroads to be published for general readership. The front cover, with a bold "frontier" type-face title and close-up view of a narrow-gauge Rio Grande Railroad steam engine, and a back cover picture of a huge Union Pacific diesel locomotive suggest that the volume may be a photographic essay on some or many western American railroads, similar to such books as George Abdill's *Rails West*, Ehrenberger's and Gschwind's *Smoke across the Prairie*, or several of Lucius Beebe's works. Then one reads the title of the first chapter, "Employee Alcoholism on the Burlington Railroad, 1876-1902." What kind of book is this, anyway?

Other chapters deal with James J. Hill, founder of the Great Northern Railway, competition between railroads and Missouri River steamboats, depot architecture, railroad ambitions, and abandonments in the Midwest. Distinctly, this is not the typical pictorial review of railroads or railroad history. What it is, is a compilation of nine completely unrelated theses, written by professors of history at several American universities and colleges, a doctoral candidate, an economist, and some railroaders. One of the articles was written by H. Roger

Grant, who co-authored *The Country Railroad Station in America*, which was reviewed in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, spring 1979. Each author has included photographs, maps, and captions pertaining to his subject; and the editor has interspersed some unrelated railroad material, such as poster reproductions, where there was some extra space on a page.

The editor states that the research contained within the volume is not comprehensive but is current and provides newly found information. He suggests that the articles will serve as a catalyst for further research, as, indeed, good research should. Each chapter (article) is written in a scholarly manner and shows the result of much work. Several of them include excellent lists of references.

What is not clear, however, is why the material has been brought together and published as a book rather than having been included in history journals. Admittedly, there is a paucity of scholarly journals on railroad history, and this book serves as a forum for putting research into print, but if it has been produced for the general "railroad-reading" market, it is on the wrong track.

Also, despite the book's title, a rather substantial part of it concerns midwestern railroad activities. Of course, several purely "western" railroads, of necessity, extend part way into the Midwest to such rail centers as Omaha, Kansas City, Saint Louis, and Chicago; but some of the articles are concerned solely with railroading in the Mississippi River Valley, Iowa, and Missouri, and a couple of others are heavier midwestern than western.

The editor has provided an extensive bibliography, although the way it has been paragraphed makes it hard to read. References include numerous available railroad books, western and general; numerous articles from various state historical publications; surveys; biographies; labor relations; land grants; corporate histories. The index is small but basically adequate. There is an irritating advertisement on the inside front cover.

The last section before the index is entitled "A Nostalgic Portfolio of Western Railroads" and is simply eighteen

pages of photographs with one-line captions. Again, the photographs bear no specific relationship to any of the preceding chapters, and all but three or four pictures are standard publicity views of locomotives and trains taken from the railroads' own files. Most have appeared several times in other publications. Only the few pictures of a steam-powered tourist railroad on the Colorado-New Mexico border appear to be original. A question might be: Have the pictures been included in order to broaden the appeal of what is otherwise a publication of limited scope?

In summary, the work appears like an issue of a scholarly journal, with more than the usual number of typographic and caption errors, rather than a book on a more specific topic. It does not treat railroads in the West only and will possibly be disappointing to many but of value to those readers and researchers really interested in the limited topics.

STEPHEN L. CARR
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The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860. By JOHN D. UNRUH, JR. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979. Xviii + 565 pp. \$22.50.)

In today's jet age, it takes about three hours to travel through the friendly skies from Kansas City to California or Oregon. Over a century ago, in the period from 1841 to 1860, an overland journey from the Missouri River jumping-off points to a California or Oregon destination averaged about 125 days. What were the realities of travel in the antebellum years as the pioneers struggled to make that arduous journey? This was the question addressed by the late Professor Unruh as he endeavored to move beyond generalizations into a new study dedicated to telling it like it really was.

Although much has been written about the great migration, Unruh found that previous accounts tended to stress

either the narrowly particular or the broadly general. To provide a middle ground for a meaningful synthesis, he decided to utilize the organizing principles of change over time, emigrant cooperation, and interaction between the emigrants. Using these guidelines, and working with a multitude of contemporary newspapers, letters, diaries, and reminiscence accounts, Unruh has succeeded admirably in his quest to recreate the spirit of the times on a framework of reality.

A cogent introduction devoted to a survey of the present status of historical writing about the overland emigrants is followed by an examination of public opinion as it was expressed at the time

in arguments either supporting or deriding both the feasibility and the necessity for the migration. The major portion of the book takes the reader through a systematic analysis of the changing role over time of those who provided assistance to the emigrants: the Indians, the federal government, private entrepreneurs, the Mormon settlements in the Salt Lake Valley, and the emerging settlements on the West Coast. Other chapters deal with journey preparation, motivations for traveling west, and incidences of emigrant cooperation and interaction. A final summation by the author reiterates and reinforces his thesis that "the emigrant experience was ever changing; each travel year evidenced distinctive patterns, unique dramas of triumph and tragedy, new contributions to the mosaic of western development" (379-80).

The key words in Unruh's conclusions are "ever changing." There were no typical years in the great migration. Composition of the traveling community changed each year, depending upon the particular blend of factors motivating the travelers. By 1860 the gradual increase of public and military way stations and the assistance provided for those in need by the growing coastal settlements ensured that the great majority of those who planned with care would arrive safely at their destinations. However, the author shows clearly that it would be a mistake to assume that there

was always a progressive growth pattern in the improvement of conditions favoring a safe journey. It is in the development of this part of his thesis that readers interested in Mormon history will appreciate Unruh's meticulous examination of the ebb and flow of Mormon assistance, depending upon fluctuations in the relative abundance of the annual harvests and upon the vagaries of the anti-Mormon political climate.

This book is well deserving of the plaudits that it has received. Here is, indeed, a providential juxtaposition of historical evidence and skillful interpretation. If there is a weakness to be found in this work, it may be discerned in the great preponderance of quotations selected to sustain the author's arguments. The overkill syndrome is often hard to avoid in the preparation of a doctoral dissertation for publication. Each and every note card gathered from years of research appears to have a significance to the story that cannot be callously abandoned. But this criticism pales before the truly excellent contribution made by the author to the scholarship in his field. A judicious selection of maps and illustrations, along with copious end notes and an impressive bibliography, makes this a complete historical study in every respect.

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Photography and the Old West. By KAREN CURRENT and WILLIAM R. CURRENT. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1978. 272 pp. \$19.95.)

As much as any diary-keeper or journalist, the nineteenth-century photographers recorded the West as it was being won by means of the camera lens. They captured the atmosphere of mushrooming towns and the sod houses of the gritty Nebraskan homesteaders. They photographed the life of the open range,

the Indian, the railroad; the rivers, the sea, and the virgin quality of untouched wonderlands; the devastation rent by the elements and man-made massacres; the hardships and despair engraved on the faces of the people. Countless camera lenses chronicled the drama and the cast of characters.

The authors begin with an essay on the importance of the early photographer as a conscious historian and his role in documenting the western scene. Of particular interest to today's photographer are the descriptions of cameras, tools, and processes used during the development of photographic history. The book is directed to a selective look rather than a comprehensive survey of the imagery of the West. The 170 photographs represent the work of nineteen photographers. The authors' intent is to convey how a few of them learned to use the camera and became camera-wise in their own individual ways and what they hoped to express.

Included is a section on the photographers who accompanied the U.S. government surveys: Timothy H. O'Sullivan (King and Wheeler surveys), John K. Hillers (Powell Survey), and William H. Jackson (Hayden Survey). Loaded with heavy and awkward equipment, they braved the narrow defiles, treacherous rivers, and precarious mountain ledges to portray the new land. Of particular interest to Utah, the enormously productive William Henry Jackson and John K. Hillers made tremendous contributions with views of both geographic features and Indian culture of the state.

Such masters as Darius Kinsey (Northwest lumber country), Edward S. Curtis (Indians), Thomas McKee (Mesa Verde), and Arnold Genthe (San Francisco earthquake and Chinatown) are not found in this work. But those selected have left a contribution in documenting various facets of the American West.

The building of the transcontinental railroad brought fame to Andrew J. Russell who was hired by the Union Pacific to make a photographic series in order to publicize its railroad. Not relevant to the railroad is some fine work he also did on the peripheral areas, including views of interest and importance to Utahns.

From Montana to Texas, Andrew Alexander Forbes roamed the cattle country, capturing with his lens the aching isolation of the ranges and the dreary monotonous days of the cowpuncher. A unique contribution was his epic series on one of the wildest and most chaotic manifestations of the settling of the West—the opening of land for settlement in Guthrie, Oklahoma, where a town literally sprang up over night. The numbers that waited to claim a piece of Oklahoma soil burgeoned into legions. Forbes waited with his camera to record that one moment in time—the mad, mad rush for land as Oklahoma offered a last chance for the many would-be homesteaders.

The frontier was a fleeting dream, and one who keenly sensed it was John C. H. Grabill. Few of his works have been found, but his contributions to frontier history are vital. He was at the scene shortly following the tragedy at Wounded Knee, and, later, his most compelling portrayal of the last frontier was a series on Indian-military relationships.

One of the finest collections to come out of the West is that of pioneer photographer George Edward Anderson. Anderson photographed the scenes around him, the life of rural Utah. He posed his subjects going about their labors, their tools an important part of the scene. There is a sense of activity and vitality that few photographers achieved. At the time of the coal mine explosion near Scofield, Utah, where 199 men and boys were killed, he hastened to the scene to record the events, from the charred bodies being hauled from the mines to the day of the mass funeral. Better than any artist he captured the tragedy written in the faces of the survivors. For the LDS church, of which he was a member, he photographed a series on the church's movements from New England to Salt Lake Valley. Incredibly prolific, Anderson

remains one of the best photographers to emerge from the dry-plate era. These synopses represent but a portion of the text.

This handsome work is part of the program of the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth, Texas. The late Mitchell A. Wilder did a magnificent job during his eighteen years as director of the museum in bringing forth obscure works as well as those of the many well-known artisans of the West.

Although some photographs in the book have been used many times in other publications, they do serve a purpose in illustrating the photographers' works. The book is readable and well written and is complete with a bibliography, an index, and an informative chronology concerning the life and times of the photographers.

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Book Notices

Zuñi: Selected Writings of Frank Hamilton Cushing. Edited by JESSE GREEN. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. Xiv + 440 pp. \$16.95.)

Frank Hamilton Cushing was one of those marvelous eccentrics, like Sir Richard Burton or T. E. Lawrence, sometimes encountered in either the British army or foreign service. Although the British eccentrics always seemed to leave a trail of superiors muttering, "Good Lord, the blighter's gone native on us," Cushing was fortunate at the Bureau of Ethnology to work for John Wesley Powell who appreciated his genius. The first professional anthropologist to live with "primitives," Cushing was renown for his linguistic gifts and his skill in Indian crafts such as pottery- and arrowhead-making.

Jesse Green has done a splendid job of gathering various Cushing writings together into one volume. Equally splendid is the editor's introduction, one section of which concludes: "All these episodes illustrate that Cushing's role at Zuni

went well beyond that of a collector of ethnological material. The first professional ethnologist in the field, he was no doubt the last to collect his own scalps."

The Artifact Hunter's Handbook. By MICHAEL HUDOBA. (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978. Viii + 163 pp. Cloth, \$12.95; paper, \$5.95.)

Mr. Hudoba should know better. As a veteran newspaper columnist with professed interest in conservation, natural resources, and the environment, he should be ashamed to use preservation-archaeology terminology and resources to authenticate what is essentially the sport of the pothunter—traditional enemy of the professional archaeologist and historian. While admitting that "unsupervised disturbance at the site of an ancient home of man has taken place enough times to leave gaps of information in archaeological history all over the world," by his very avocation of artifact hunting Mr. Hudoba contradicts himself. Whom does he think

restrictions on unauthorized digging and taking of artifacts are aimed at—if not himself and his confreres? Nevertheless, he maintains, such restrictions “should not discourage you in your pursuit of artifact hunting.”

Instead of providing amateur artifact hunters with “memories of many pleasant, healthful, and exciting days of exploration,” the remnants of the past should be studied by professional archaeologists and historians to determine their real significance. A caption that reads “Indian hammer,” for example, tells us nothing and robs the public of a portion of man’s rightful heritage.

Heaven Knows Why. By SAMUEL W. TAYLOR. (1948; reprint ed., Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Millennial Productions, 1979. 213 pp. Paper, \$3.95.)

Sam Taylor’s first novel, called by some the only humorous Mormon novel, has been reprinted and should delight a new generation of Mormon readers. Its innocent, light-hearted plot provides many chuckles, and its gentle pokes at religious foibles are obviously done with love.

Journey Home. By YOSHIKO UCHIDA. (New York: Atheneum, 1978. Viii + 131 pp. \$7.95.)

In this, her eleventh book, Yoshiko Uchida describes the lives of twelve-year-old Yuki and her parents who have just been released from the relocation camp at Topaz, Utah. The author based this work and an earlier book for young readers, *Journey to Topaz*, on her own experiences at the camp. Miss Uchida tells the story graphically and candidly. Young readers will see the dust of the western desert swirling around the tarpaper shacks and share Yuki’s anxieties. Although this is historical fiction, it would be a most appropriate reading for Utah history students in the seventh grade.

Women, Women Writers, and the West.

Edited by LAWRENCE L. LEE and MERRILL E. LEWIS. (Troy, N.Y.: Whitston Publishing Co., 1979. Xiii + 252 pp. \$15.00.)

A provocative collection of eighteen essays on the image of women in the literature of the western experience, the book also treats the works of such major American writers as Willa Cather and Wallace Stegner. Vardis Fisher and Virginia Sorensen are among the authors with a Utah connection who are considered, the former in a challenging piece that compares the nurturing females of the *Mountain Man* with Ken Kesey’s Big Nurse.

Challenge and Response: The First Security Corporation First Fifty Years, 1928–1978. By SIDNEY HYMAN. (Salt Lake City: First Security Foundation and Graduate School of Business, University of Utah, 1978. Xxiv + 462 pp. \$15.00.)

Although corporate histories are not the lifeblood of historical society libraries, they can round out the historical picture by providing an aspect of the story not always considered. They can be microcosms of an area’s financial story and place prominent figures in true perspective, as this study ably demonstrates. *Challenge and Response* is the story of a Utah-based corporation that not only weathered the volatile 1920s and the following depression but helped to check the financial collapse of the Intermountain West.

California Catholicity. By FRANCIS J. WEBER. (Los Angeles: Dawson’s Book Shop, 1979. xv + 207 pp.)

This compilation of weekly miniessays should have remained in the uncollected works of Father Weber since they are scarcely informative of either Catholicism or California.

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